
**ENERGY PROGRAMS
ENERGY PROGRAMS OUTREACH PLAN**

**EP – 200 ENERGY PROGRAMS OUTREACH PLAN
CHANGE #1-2014
October 1, 2014**

NOTE: Energy Programs Outreach Plan is due by July 31st of each year.

200.01 REQUIREMENTS

- A.** Outreach must be provided to assure that eligible households are made aware of the available assistance.
- B.** In addition to social services, other state and local governmental entities or community-based organizations must be contacted and offered the opportunity to provide outreach and take applications.

200.02 OUTREACH GUIDELINES

The following are guidelines and suggestions as to how outreach requirements may be fulfilled.

A. Purpose and Target Groups

The purpose of outreach is to reach and serve those eligible for and in need of assistance. Give priority to the following groups:

- 1. Elderly population age 60 and above and disabled persons receiving services through the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS). Priority in LIEAP eligibility is given to these households beginning December 1st through December 31st of every year.
- 2. Those individuals and families with the lowest income and highest relative energy cost are potentially eligible for benefits beginning January 1st through March 31st of every year.

B. Establishment of an Interagency Committee

One of the major factors in creating an effective outreach program is the identification of and coordination with other agencies, organizations, and groups that can assist in outreach activities. The county director or his designee may establish a committee and encourage participation of local agencies and community-based organizations.

The county director or his designee may also want to investigate the possibility of utilizing existing energy advisory groups as part of the interagency committee. Contact may be made with agencies and groups such as the following:

- 1. Community service agencies such as community action agencies and public and private non-profit agencies serving families and children, especially those households with the lowest income and highest relative energy costs and needs.
- 2. Volunteer programs.
- 3. Regional area agencies on aging and senior citizens' organizations such as Councils on Aging and Focal Points on Aging.
- 4. Local health departments.

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5. Community-based Indian organizations.
6. Home energy suppliers.
7. Federal government agencies such as Social Security district offices, Veteran's Administration offices, and post offices.
8. The public education and public library systems.
9. Vocational Rehabilitation offices.
10. Churches and religious organizations.
11. Legal services organizations.
12. Migrant service organizations.
13. Public media facilities.
14. Home health agencies.
15. Local colleges and universities with organizations that may be looking for community projects.
16. Other agencies and organizations in your area that may be willing to assist in outreach efforts.

C. Providing Information to the Interagency Committee

1. When agencies are first contacted, explain the purpose of the energy program, solicit their participation on the committee, and their assistance in outreach efforts.
2. At the first committee meeting, the county director or his designee should:
 - a. Explain the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) and the Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) and coordinate this effort.
 - b. Provide any informational materials on LIEAP and CIP [e.g. DSS-8117, flyers, manual material]; and
 - c. Poll the various agencies on the types of assistance they might provide in the outreach effort.

While individual contacts with agencies would be needed during the course of the program, the committee approach would help to ensure coordination and prevent duplication of effort.

The interagency committee could be utilized, not just in relation to LIEAP and CIP, but as a group concerned with the broader problem of energy needs of the poor, elderly, and disabled. It could also become concerned with attempting to mobilize various resources in addition to benefits provided through LIEAP and CIP.

D. Providing Ease of Access to the Program

The county director or his designee can use the following methods to ensure program access to priority groups:

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1. Establish and utilize media contacts to publicize the program's eligibility requirements and methods of applying.
2. Publicize, in advance, hours of operation and application-taking in outpost offices. Encourage participation of media representatives on the interagency committee to facilitate this process.
3. Take applications at outpost offices, congregate dining facilities for the elderly, churches, community centers, senior citizens centers, and community-based Indian organizations to encourage participation of those without access or transportation to county departments. Full county coverage can be assured by establishing locations for application-taking throughout the county. Make particular efforts to ensure rural coverage.
4. The interagency committee could be utilized to coordinate transportation. Pursue the use of volunteers for transportation services. See 200.07 "Use of Volunteers."

200.03 APPLICATION GUIDELINES

In addition to social services, other state and local governmental entities or community-based organizations must be contacted and offered the opportunity to provide outreach and take applications. Examples of community-based organizations are not-for-profit neighborhood-based organizations, area agencies on aging, and community action agencies.

A. This requirement may be met in one of three ways. You may:

1. Set up outpost locations at one or more of these agencies and have a county caseworker take applications; or
2. Contract application-taking to one of these agencies for details of this process; or
3. Have these agencies take applications in addition to the county department of social services.

If you select option 2 or 3 above, the county director or his designee must contact the agencies to determine whether they are interested in taking applications. This may be done as part of the first interagency committee meeting. (See 200.02C. above) These agencies must register (log) all individuals requesting to apply for LIEAP. Agencies may use the DMA-5093, Daily Reception Log, for Medical and Financial Assistance, which includes the LIEAP and CIP Programs. When you offer outside agencies the opportunity to take applications and they choose not to, document the agencies contacted, whom you talked with, and the outcome.

The application-taking requirements have been met by contacting one of these agencies, regardless of whether it chooses to take applications.

If an outside agency takes applications, it is suggested that you have a Memorandum of Understanding or written agreement with the agency. This agreement is needed to ensure compliance with deadlines for application processing and with confidentiality requirements.

B. The county director or his designee must meet with the agencies which will be taking applications and discuss the following:

1. Explanation of the LIEAP Application Process

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2. Forms needed to take applications and how they will be supplied
3. Training needs for staff who will take applications
4. Coordination procedures between the county department of social services and other agencies
5. Dates for LIEAP application-taking
6. Critical time frames for receiving applications
7. Procedures to avoid duplication
8. Memorandum of Understanding or written agreement

C. County Department's Responsibilities

If an outside agency takes applications, the county director or his designee is responsible for:

1. Training the other agency's staff.
2. Maintaining fiscal responsibility for the program.
3. Maintaining confidentiality. Disclosure of information in case records to other agencies about any Work First, Food and Nutrition Services, MA, Energy, or Service applicant/recipient (a/r) is not allowed.
4. Requesting and verifying information needed to process applications.
5. Processing applications within the prescribed time frames.

200.04 OUTREACH PLAN

The county director or his designee is required to develop an Outreach Plan, which addresses outreach and application activities. The plan must be approved by the local Board of Social Services or Human Services Board prior to submission. As a part of the plan, counties must also address how to meet the requirement for outreach and application taken by outside agencies. This information must be included for the plan to be approved. Each year, auditors review the plans to ensure compliance for outreach and monitoring activities. See Figure 200-1 for a sample format.

NOTE: Each county's Outreach Plan is specifically designed to meet the needs of its current population. Outreach Plans will differ between counties.

Include the following in your Outreach Plan.

A. Outreach

1. Groups to be contacted to participate on an interagency committee
2. Dates for committee meetings
3. Names of agencies which will assist in outreach (NOTE: Agencies may do outreach and/or take applications.)
4. What outreach activities the agencies will provide
5. How outreach will be coordinated between the county department of social services and these other agencies

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6. Newspaper, radio stations, and television stations contacted to publicize the Energy Program

B. Application Process

1. Names of agencies which will assist in taking applications (NOTE: Agencies may do outreach and/or take applications.)
2. How the application process will be coordinated between the county department of social services and these other agencies
3. Outpost sites planned for taking applications

200.05 DUE DATES FOR PLAN SUBMITTAL AND APPROVAL

The Economic and Family Services Section must receive the Outreach plan **no later** than August 1st of each year. The Economic and Family Services Section notifies the county if the plan is not approved and the areas that need to be corrected. If the county is not contacted within 15 days after submission of the plan, the plan is approved and may be implemented.

Mail plans to the following address:

NC Division of Social Services
Economic and Family Services Section
2420 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2420

NOTE: Counties have the option of amending their Energy Programs Outreach Plan during the course of the State fiscal year.

200.06 SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR COUNTIES WITH STATE-RECOGNIZED INDIAN TRIBES

The following tribes (in the counties noted) receive an allocation to provide outreach and to take applications:

Tribe	Counties
Waccamaw-Siouan Tribal Council, Inc.	Bladen
Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Inc.	Columbus
Coharie Intra-Tribal Council	Halifax
	Warren
	Harnett
	Sampson

The counties noted must establish contact with the tribe and arrange a meeting to discuss outreach efforts, program coordination, scheduling of activities and procedures to eliminate duplication.

200.07 POTENTIAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY OTHER LOCAL AGENCIES AND VOLUNTEERS

The following are examples of some of the services that might be provided by other local agencies and volunteer groups:

- A. Provide transportation
- B. Distribute informational literature

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- C. Energy program referrals
- D. Assist in prescreening potential eligibles
- E. Serve as authorized representatives
- F. Taking applications (See EP-300)

NOTE: Volunteers can take applications but not process the application.

200.08 OUTREACH EFFORTS

A. Division of Social Services Outreach Efforts

The following are some of the activities planned by the Division of Social Services to supplement county outreach efforts.

- 1. Work with other state agencies and advocacy groups to assist in coordination of outreach at the local level. Each agency will work with his local counterpart to ensure coordination.
- 2. DHHS Public Affairs Office will provide press releases to agency media contacts throughout the State. The county director is informed prior to such releases.
- 3. Provide a pamphlet (DSS-8117) to be available on the State DSS Website for county departments and other agencies regarding basic eligibility requirements and method of application.

B. County Department of Social Services Outreach Efforts

The following are some of the outreach efforts the county director or his designee may conduct.

- 1. Ensure that all Department of Social Services' employees are aware of the energy programs offered, basic eligibility requirements, and the county's referral process.

Suggested methods of notification are:
 - a. A memorandum from the director or his designee to each employee outlining the energy and CIP program.
 - b. Having a member of the energy staff attend unit or section meetings to discuss the energy and CIP program.
- 2. Publicize the energy programs whenever possible.

200.09 OTHER SERVICES

A. LifeLine/Link-up Assistance Programs

LifeLine is a program that provides low- income families a discount off the cost of local monthly telephone service. A maximum of one discount per household is permitted. A household is defined as an individual or group of individuals living at the same address as an economic unit. An economic unit consists of all adult individuals contributing to and sharing in the income and expenses of a household. If the family receives LIEAP or CIP, they may be eligible for this service. Households interested in this service must apply directly with the telephone company.

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Link-up is a discount program on local telephone connection cost, available for low-income qualified Native Americans who reside on federally recognized tribal lands. If the family receives LIEAP or CIP they may be eligible for this service. Households interested in this must apply with their telephone company.

B. Utilities Moratorium

1. The North Carolina's Utilities Commission order regarding disconnection/termination of services is listed below.
 - a. This order applies to the regulated electric and gas companies listed below:

Duke Energy
Nantahala Power and Light Company
North Carolina Power Company
New River Light and Power Company
Western Carolina University
Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc.
Pennsylvania and Southern Gas Company/North Carolina Gas service
Public Service Company of North Carolina, Inc.
PSNC Energy
2. Terminations of Services for all Customers

Before one of the regulated utilities companies discontinues services, the customers must:

 - a. Receive a written notice; **and**
 - b. Be contacted personally to the extent possible; **and**
 - c. Be provided an opportunity to make installment payments over six months for past and current bills.
3. Limited Moratorium on Termination of Services

Regulated utility companies cannot discontinue service from November 1 through March 31 of each year for certain eligible households that:

 - a. Contain a member who is elderly (age 65 or over) or is disabled; **and**
 - b. Cannot pay the utility bill in part or in full; **and**
 - c. Meet the eligibility requirements for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP); **and**
 - d. Have been certified as being eligible for LIEAP. The household does not actually have to receive assistance through LIEAP to qualify.
4. Application Procedures
 - a. General Information

You must:

 - (1) Cooperate in certifying households for the limited moratorium.

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- (2) Disseminate information to other social services programs in order that people who may be receiving assistance from these programs will be aware of the moratorium.
 - (3) Certify eligible households for the moratorium and tell them about the installment plan. (Use of this moratorium may enable you to stretch your county funds further.)
 - b. Procedures for completing the DSS-8118, Certification Utilities Moratorium.
 - (1) To certify the eligible households, complete the DSS-8118, Certification Utilities Moratorium. A household that meets the utilities moratorium requirements may have a DSS-8118 sent to multiple vendors;
 - (2) Forward the original DSS-8118 to the utility company; **and**
 - (3) Give/mail the applicant a copy; **and**
 - (4) Retain one copy in your file.
 - (5) Attach any documentation used to determine eligibility for LIEAP to the file copy.
 - c. Verification and Documentation
 - (1) You can accept the client's statement regarding age and disability. An applicant certifies that he and/or a member of the household meets the definition of an aged or disabled person when he signs the DSS-8118.
 - (2) Do not forward any verification information to the utility company.
- 5. Hearing Process
 - Applicant's/Recipient's (A's/R's) Rights

An applicant or recipient may appeal to the Utilities Commission by calling (919) 733-9277 or writing to the Consumer Services Division, North Carolina Utilities Commission, 430 North Salisbury Street, 4325 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4325.

200.10 MONITORING

State Level Monitoring

Local support staff will monitor each county to ensure compliance with the approved Outreach Plan. If a compliance issue is discovered, Local Support staff assists the county in developing and implementing an appropriate corrective action plan. **Monitoring staff will select a sample of approved and denied actions for review. Provide these cases to the assigned monitor upon request to determine the accuracy of action taken on each case. Corrective Action will be requested when appropriate.**